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RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 2731

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 000905

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO ROBERT DEUTSCH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2018
TAGS: [ECIN](#) [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: AFGHAN POWER TRANSMISSION LINE TALKS
CONTINUE

Classified By: Poloff Robert McCutcheon for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) According to a working-level source in Uzbekenergo, talks on the contract to build a 43 km power line from the Surkhan substation to the Afghan border are continuing longer than expected. The Afghan team that arrived in Tashkent the week before last is still here, and talks have gone on so long that visas for the Afghans have had to be extended for another week. A high level Afghan delegation headed by Minister of Economics Dr. Shams and Minister of Water and Energy Khan is expected to arrive in Tashkent on August 5 with the goal of finalizing all financial issues and signing a contract by the end of the week.

12. (C) Our Uzbekenergo source tells us that the Uzbek side has appointed the Uztarmogqurilish Company (UTQ) as general contractor for the construction project. UTQ will form two construction brigades that will start building from opposite ends of the line -- one from the border and the other from the Surkhan substation -- and will meet in the middle. UTQ reportedly is prepared to complete the project within three months. The Afghans are discussing technical issues with UTQ engineers.

COMMENT

13. (C) UTQ claims notwithstanding, three months is a highly optimistic forecast given the lead time needed for procurement of transmission towers and other needed supplies before construction can even begin. It also stands in contrast to earlier Uzbek claims that at least ten months would be required to build the line. Thus it is highly doubtful that the line will be complete any earlier than next spring.

14. (C) The Uzbek side continues to express frustration with the Afghan negotiators. Our Uzbekenergo source has characterized the Afghans as "spoiled children who think they can get whatever they want simply by saying so."
BUTCHER